

The Financial Times of Indiana

Balanced budget news from the Office of Governor Frank O'Bannon

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The News in brief...

Today begins the short session of the 112th General Assembly.

Governor O'Bannon's Balanced Budget Plan, titled House Bill 1004 for the legislative session, takes a comprehensive approach to alleviating the looming deficit facing the state budget, as well as maintaining a prudent balance in our reserve accounts.

Without this plan, and without maintaining our reserves, there is little doubt that Hoosier families will suffer. With the national recession, many Hoosier families in the steel and airline industries have already experienced the realities of tough economic times through job loss; increased dependence on unemployment benefits, and an increased need for Medicaid benefits for some.

Cost savings have already been announced in the crucial Medicaid program. More will be made in other health-related programs providing benefits to children and seniors - not to mention difficult choices local school districts will face if state revenues continue to decline and the Balanced Budget Plan is not passed.

We must continue to protect Hoosier families from being denied services they need and deserve, and we must continue to maintain sound financial footing for Indiana's future.

A Glimpse At Indiana Families

3.0	Average size of a Hoosier family
9.1%	Percentage of Indiana families headed by single parents (both men and women)
122,150	Growth in number of Hoosier families since 1990 Census
767,836	Number of families with children under age 18
221,538	Number of Hoosiers over 65 living alone

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Data

What People Are Saying

"There are many ways for lawmakers to reduce the tax burden on homeowners, but most Hoosiers realize there's not much reason to own a home here if there aren't good jobs, good schools and healthy communities to go with it."

Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette Editorial, Dec. 12, 2001

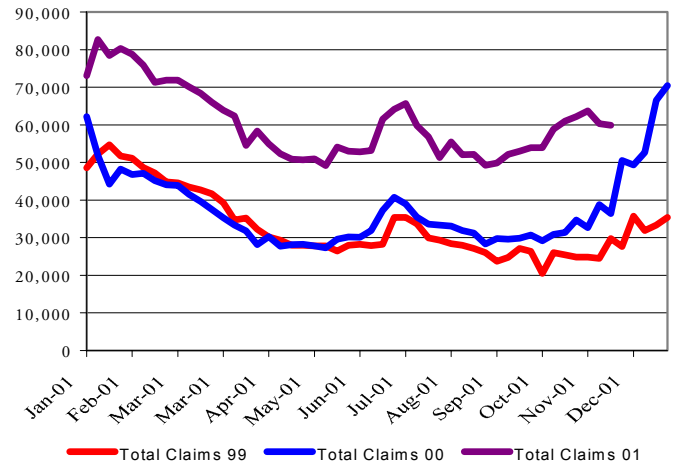
Legislative Links

2002 General Assembly Session Calendars:

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/session/calendars.html>

Indiana Unemployment Claims 1999-2001

Source: IN Dept. of Workforce Dev.



-- Family Ties --

Governor O'Bannon's Balanced Budget Plan helps continue family growth through preservation of funding for important programs while maintaining a strong financial future for Indiana.

Unemployed Hoosiers

By partnering with legislators, labor groups, and business leaders, the O'Bannon-Kernan administration protected working families by increasing unemployment benefits, which will rise to over \$330 per week by July 2003.

Education and Children

The O'Bannon-Kernan administration pushed for funding for Early Intervention grants, a program that provides \$4 million annually in grants to initiate and expand reading and literacy programs.

The administration also launched a classroom reading diagnostic assessment that is designed to detect reading problems or skill deficiencies in the first and second grades. This program, an assessment conducted as a part of regular classroom instruction, currently serves over 50,000 first graders each year.

Seniors and Hoosiers with Special Needs

A critical element in preserving the health of older Hoosiers and citizens with special needs is the opportunity to live as independently as possible. In FY 2001, the CHOICE program allowed over 12,000 older Hoosiers and citizens with special needs to obtain assistance with health and daily needs while remaining in their homes and communities.

Skills Enhancement for Working Hoosiers

Every working Hoosier deserves the opportunity to increase his or her marketability. For example, Haynes International Corporation in Kokomo works with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and Ivy Tech State College to deliver apprenticeship training and upgrade the skills of its workers. Through this effort the employees, who are members of United Steelworkers Local 2958, have seen their skill level and wages increase.

Be on the watch for...

More reasons why tax restructuring is important to economic development...